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ABSTRACT

Approaches to promoting justice education on a Catholic university campus are considered. A model of experiential learning for the sake of justice, based on the insights of liberation theology and research on cognitive development and style, suggests that there are a variety of instances within campus life where skills of justice can be learned. Another approach is that of programming centers, which can be utilized on campus to educate for justice and to make justice education an integral part of the mission of the university. The conditions for institutionalizing these programming centers, for insuring an appropriate resource base for them, and staffing approaches are examined. The experiential learning model has four major movements: awareness of institutional dilemmas and success (experiences of injustice and justice); critical reflection on dilemmas and successes to understand the social context of these experiences; creative formation of change models; and testing implications of change models in new situations through individual and group action that sustains or modifies the structures of the institution. This model can help understand how students learn the skills of justice in settings such as residence halls, student government, and curriculum development. The approach of programming centers, or justice centers, promotes recruitment and retention of students and faculty committed to justice, and facilitates scholarship and research on major justice issues (e.g., racism, world hunger). Reference is made to the concept of the pastoral circle and Kolb's experiential learning model. (SW)

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LINKING FAITH AND JUSTICE: REFLECTIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS AND EDUCATING FOR JUSTICE

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Draft of a talk to be given at the conference Education for Justice: A Conference for the College and University Community at the University of Notre Dame, June 28, 1981

ABSTRACT

The paper develops two ideas which have been useful for promoting justice education on a University campus. The first is a model of experiential learning for the sake of justice. This model, based on the insights of liberation theology and research on cognitive development and style, suggests that there are a variety of instances within campus life where skills of justice can be learned. The second idea is that of "programming centers" which can be utilized on campus to educate for justice and to make justice education an integral part of the mission of the University. The conditions for institutionalizing these programming centers, for insuring an appropriate resource base of them, and approaches to staffing them are discussed.

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Summary

Introduction

About eight years ago, a couple of us began a group on the University of Dayton campus called Strategies for Responsible Development. The purpose of this group was to bring together teachers and researchers who wanted to work on issues of third world development and international justice. This Strategies group has clearly been one of the major forces for justice education on our campus. For two years now, I have been able to look at justice education from another, and somewhat different, perspective, namely, the President's Office. Juxtaposing these two experiences has caused a number of dilemmas in my thinking. Bringing these two experiences together has forced me to rethink some of my earlier approaches to justice education.

In a large degree through the support of the Marianist community, the University of Dayton has been able to initiate many different efforts in justice education. Campus Ministry has also assisted with campus-wide programs of awareness and action. The purpose of this presentation is not to give an overview of these many programs and the people involved, but to share with you two ideas or concepts that I and others have found helpful in promoting justice education. The first idea is the model of experiential learning which makes educating for justice an integral part of the organizational and leadership processes at a Catholic college or university. The second idea has to do with the conditions under which "programming centers" can be effective in educating for justice and make justice education an integral part of the mission of the institution.

Linking Faith and Justice Through Experiential Learning

In educating for justice we endeavor to develop with the learner two interrelated skills. First, the learner must develop the skills that will allow him or her to continually work at personal conversion, that change of heart, so necessary for the reign of justice. The skills of prayer, of confronting the contradictions and sin in one's own life, of openness to truth, and a sense of compassion all contribute to life long process of conversion. Secondly, the learner must develop the skills of change which allow him or her to analyze social structures, to confront sinful and unjust situations, and to create the conditions of justice through the transformation structures. Both skills of personal and social transformation are necessary. Our colleges and universities must provide a number of contexts for learning these skills of justice. I would like to focus for a moment on the institutional context.

All institutions, including our Catholic colleges and universities are touched with social sin. Yet, we would like to believe that, in some way, our Catholic colleges and universities also give witness to the saving power of the Lord and His Kingdom. Perhaps the most difficult thing for us to accept as administrators, faculty and students is the moral ambivalence of our own institutions. It is particularly difficult for an administrator to admit that his

or her institution may have unjust structures especially when we so strongly want it to be a community of faith and justice. Yet, it is the existence of injustice or social sin within our institutions which provides one of the important contexts for learning the skills of justice.

Liberation Theology and the Pastoral Circle

One approach to confronting the existence of social sin and injustice in our institutions is suggested by the liberation theologians of South America. Figure 1 illustrates the pastoral circle or circle of praxis which comes out of the writings of Segundo [4] and Freire [1]. The four movements of this pastoral circle are outlined by Holland and Henroit [2, pp. 3 and 4] as follows:

> The first moment in the pastoral circle -- and the basis for any pastoral action -- is experience. The lived experiences of individuals and communities must be the foundation for all pastoral responses. What people are feeling, what they are undergoing, how they are responding -- these are the experiences that constitute primary data.
>
> These experiences must be understood in the richness of all their interrelationships. This is the task of social analysis, the second moment in the pastoral circle. Social analysis examines causes, probes consequences, delineates linkages, and identifies actors. It helps make sense of experiences by putting them into a broader picture and drawing the connections between them.
>
> The third moment is theological reflection, an effort to understand more broadly and deeply the analyzed experience in the light of living faith, scripture, church, social teaching, and the resources of tradition. The Word of God brought to bear upon the situation raises new questions, suggests new insights, and opens new responses.
>
> Since the purpose of the pastoral circle is action, the fourth moment in the circle is crucial: pastoral planning. In the light of experiences analyzed and reflected upon, what response is called for by individuals and by communities? How should the response be designed in order to be most effective?
>
> A response of action in a particular situation brings about a situation of new experiences. These experiences in turn call for moral analysis, reflection, and planning. Thus, the pastoral circle continues without final conclusion.

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If we assume for a moment that the skills of learning justice through confronting social sin and injustice in our institutions is analogous to the pastoral circle which comes out of the South American context, then several conclusions might be drawn. Among these conclusions are:

1. A person's experience within an institution, particularly a personal experience of injustice, is an entry into learning the skills of justice.

2. Critical reflection is necessary to identify and structure the causes, consequences and linkages which contribute to an experience of injustice within the institution.

3. Catholic Christian Humanism gives us a context out of which to understand our analyzed institutional experience. Catholic Christian Humanism is a resource which helps us raise new questions, provides us with symbols and images for new insights and liberates within us a creature response.

4. Learning for justice requires that we, as individuals, groups, and institutions, take some action which will transform our institutional context.

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Although the pastoral circle comes out of a completely different context, it has many similarities to David Kolb's experiential learning model. Kolb, an organizational psychologist, developed the model of how people learn in organizational settings. The model represents the integration of many concepts from the research on cognitative development and cognitive style. The four movements of this model are illustrated in Figure 2. The learners "must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences; they must be able to observe and reflect on these experiences from many perspectives; they must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories; and they must use these theories to make decisions and solve problems." [3, p. 236]."

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Place Figure 2: about here

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The experiential learning model both complements and enriches the pastoral circle in a number of important ways. First, there is a sound educational theory to support the process of learning the skills of justice that is suggested by the pastoral circle. Second, the experiential learning model challenges the pastoral circle approach by widening the range of experiences attended to in the process of learning. The pastoral circle approach tends to focus on the experience of injustice; the experiential learning model also examines the positive experiences of justice that occur within an institution.

The social analysis of the pastoral circle often regards social structures with suspicion; the experiential learning model also examines the life-giving nature of the social structures.

The experiential learning model utilizes a cognitive developmental theory of human growth as one of its resources. The learning process suggested by the pastoral circle is a development one. The work of Kohlberg and many others can be a guide in the facilitation of young adults in the process of learning the skills of justice.

Learning Justice in an Institutional Context

Let me pull together several of the ideas that have been presented into a model for learning justice in an institutional context. If we accept the fact that our institutions are morally ambigious, i. e. they are at once an experience of justice and injustice, of grace and of social sin, then our institutions can provide the context for learning the skills of justice. Combining the insights of the pastoral circle and the Kolb's experiential learning model and then applying them to the context of an institution of higher learning, suggests the model given in Figure 3.

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This model describes a process for learning justice within an institutional context. As with previous models, this model has four major movements:

Awareness of institutional dilemmas and success: Awareness of experiences of injustice (institutional dilemmas) and of justice (institutional successes) constitutes the starting for learning and the primary data used in learning.

Critical reflection on dilemmas and successes: These experiences must be understood in a social context. The experiences of both justice and injustice have causes, they have consequences for people of the institution, they are linked to other situations, and involve different actors. Critical reflection helps develop an understanding of this social context.

Creative formation of change models: Understanding the experiences of injustice and justice within an institution leads to the question, "What can be done to maintain and enrich the experiences of justice and to modify, change, or transform the experiences of injustice?" This challenges the learner to formulate models of change. To generate the insights for these models, the resources of living faith and of the intellect must be utilized. The formation of images and models of change open us to new questions, new insights, and new sensitivities.

Testing implications of change models in new situations: Reflection on experience and formation of change models challenge the learner to plan individual and group action which will sustain, modify, or transform the structures of the institution. The learner confronts the question, "How can I create a more just situation?"

This model has suggested many applications to us at the University of Dayton. The model helps us understand how students learn the skills of justice in a wide variety of settings, such as, residence halls, student government, student newspaper, changing curriculum, and planning for the future of the institution. During the discussion, I will be glad to explore some of these applications.

Programming Centers Which Promote Justice

A second idea that has been utilized in the promotion of justice education is that of "programming centers." I apologize for the word; it is a bit of jargon and not very suggestive of the reality which we are attempting to describe. I have tried the term "centers of excellence," but that took us down a wrong path.

Over the last eight years we have been working with "centers," i.e. the intentional clustering of people for a common task and utilization of a "programming" approach to accomplish that task. Through the resources of the Marianists and the collaboration of Marianist and lay faculty, three centers were set up, namely,

The Office of Educational Services: a group mainly in our School of Education that aimed to enhance policy making based on relevant knowledge and value commitments.

The Office for Moral and Religious Education: A group mainly from the Religious Studies Department which aimed to enhance the joint planning and sponsorship of continuing education efforts for adults in the area of values moral and religious education.

Strategies for Responsible Development: An interdisciplinary group from several sectors of the University which aimed to promote distributive justice through education and awareness.

All of these centers have had a justice orientation from the beginning. Over all, these centers have been successful. Major projects have been undertaken. The merger of Catholic schools has proceeded with sound data, informed judgments, and a sense of justice. The awareness of justice issues has increased through research, teaching, and continuing education. The University has a major development project in Niger. A proposal for an international development minor is before the Academic Council of the College of Arts and Sciences. There are numerous others. Yet, one question is continually perplexing and bothersome to me and others: "Have we really institutionalized these centers at the University of Dayton?" In some ways the answer is clearly "Yes," but in many important ways "No." I would like to share some reflections that have come out of pondering this question. I want to explore some of the conditions for implementing "programming centers" which promote justice.

Purpose of Programming Centers

One helpful way to structure our reflection and exploration on programming centers is to focus our thinking around three questions: "WHAT are programming centers?", "WHY would you create programming centers?", and "HOW do you create programming centers?" The WHAT of programming centers is pretty straight forward. It is a clustering of people to work together on a common task which is related to the mission of the University. In our case, we are talking about centers where people are clustered for the task of educating for justice and promoting justice. Both of these tasks are constitutive elements of our mission.

The concept of center and of center building is at least recognized by the faculty on almost every campus. For example, we are ending a workshop sponsored by the Center for Experiential Learning. The Center for Experiential Learning is part of the Center for Social and Pastoral Ministry. Our program is being held in the Center for Continuing Education. Yet, the question of institutionalizing a center on a campus remains somewhat mysterious.

There are a number of interesting reasons WHY you would want programming centers that promote justice and justice education on the campus. At this point, I will utilize the term "justice centers" to indicate programming centers which promote justice and justice education. The following reasons seem to me to be important:

1. Justice centers allow us to attract and retain faculty who are interested in and are committed to justice education. Faculty with a commitment to justice are a necessary "leaven" for a Catholic institution. Justice centers can provide a peer support group for faculty.

2. Justice centers allow us to attract students who are interested in and committed to justice. The activity of the centers provide a catalyst to students for developing the skills of living justly. If there is to be a distinctive difference in our graduates, then their commitment to justice must be one of them.

3. Justice centers can facilitate scholarship and research on major justice issues, e.g. racism, world hunger, etc. Justice centers can be a catalyst to our intellectual ministry to the Church and the world.

4. Viable justice centers can make explicit and manifest the University's commitment to justice.

The importance of any of these purposes will depend on the type of emphasis that you have in the justice center.

Some Guidelines on Building Justice Centers

There is no right and proper way to answer the question of HOW we create justice centers on campuses. Yet, I believe there are some guidelines that may be very helpful in building justice centers. The guidelines are intuitively developed from our experience at the University of Dayton. Through conversations, I have been able to verify most of them.

1. Initially the mission of the justice center must be a clearly and narrowly defined mission.

   A major failure in initiating justice centers is the lack of a clearly defined and narrowly focused mission. Without this mission, efforts are diffused

and little effective progress is made. This lack of clarity and focus in a mission statement can be the result of fuzzy thinking about what the founders of the center want to accomplish, or a desire to be all things to all people. A clear mission allows for directed work effort and relatively undistorted communication. The mission of the justice center can broaden once a solid record of several years of performance has been established.

2. There must be a "critical mass" of staff.

For a justice center to happen, people must spend time with it and spend lots of time. There must be a director of the center and a couple of associates, who can spend at least half their time dedicated to the center. There must be a secretary/administrative assistant who can coordinate and provide continuity for the center. For reasons that will be more obvious later, the professional staff of the center should hold rank and tenure in the academic departments. A "critical mass" of at least three people, helps provide the peer support and encouragement that is needed to develop the center. The "critical mass" is also important for the intellectual diversity necessary to promote the work of the center.

3. There must be adequate resources to support the center.

To assemble the critical mass of staff needed for the center requires resources. There must also be resources to cover operations, travel, and publications. It is my opinion that about $75,000 to $150,000 annually is required to run a justice center at an effective level. Lesser funding is possible, but you are trading off long-term viability for short-term effectiveness.

The funds for support of a justice center can come from a variety of sources. An institution can utilize its operating budget to support the center. Another source of funds would fund research or consulting services. Care must be taken that these activities fit within the mission of the center. Endorsements are another important source for funding justice centers on campuses.

4. The center must be strongly linked to the organizational structure, but not dominated by the organizational culture.

   Being strongly linked to the institutional structure is hard to define. You can easily give more negative examples than positive ones, such as not being on mailing lists or ignored on organizational charts. One important linkage is that of the top administration -- the President, the Provost and the Deans -- they must be strongly supportive and encouraging of the justice center. Support is shown by helping to articulate the mission of the center, defending the center at budget time, and making certain the center is part of the long-range planning of the institution.

   By the term "organizational culture" we mean the learned beliefs, values, and characteristic patterns of behavior that exist within the institution. Traditional academic cultures work against justice centers; the culture tends to be oriented around discipline and status and rewards are given for performance in traditional departments. For justice centers to thrive, we must reward faculty for participating in these activities. At the same time faculty in these centers must earn the respect of their colleagues by performance in one of the traditional disciplines. The control of the centers of excellence should be with the Dean or the Provost. Budgets for justice centers that are controlled by department chairpersons have a tendency to be absorbed by those departments.

5. There must be a balance between stability and change within the center.

   There is a need for continuity and adaptability within the justice center. Strong leadership must be provided in order to develop the center and to provide continuity for it. There also should be a process for introducing new personnel into the center so that new ideas and new vitality are an ongoing part of the center.

Much more can be said on developing justice centers on campus. I am sure we will discuss many practical issues during our discussion period.

Summary

This paper has developed two ideas for promoting justice education within the institutional context of a Catholic University. The first idea was the concept of experiential learning for the sake of justice and how it can be promoted in a variety of settings within the campus community. The second was an exploration of the conditions for institutionalizing programming centers which promote justice and justice education.

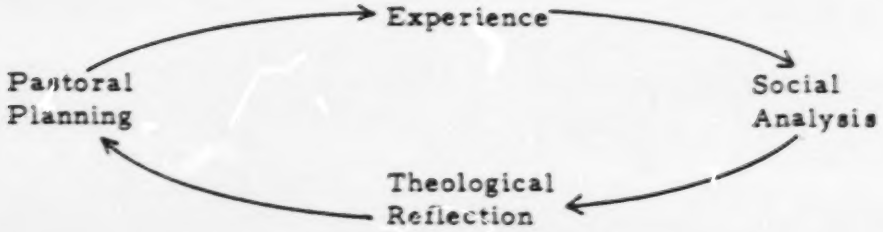

Figure 1: Pastoral Circle

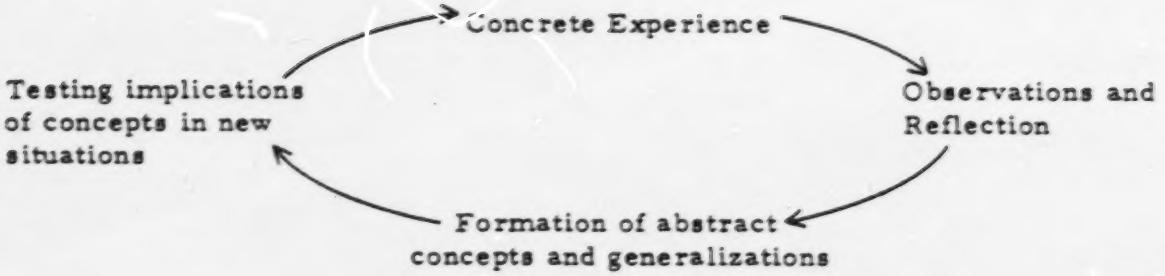
Concrete Experience
Observations and Reflection
Formation of abstract concepts and generalizations
Testing implications of concepts in new situations

Figure 2: Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

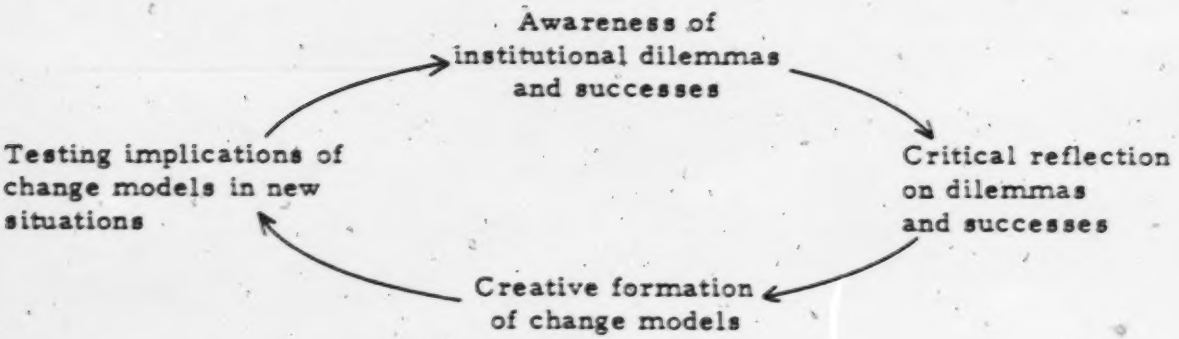
Awareness of institutional dilemmas and successes
Critical reflection on dilemmas and successes
Creative formation of change models
Testing implications of change models in new situations

Figure 3: Learning Justice in an Institutional Context

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